What is claimed is

1.   A tracking system for a shipping system in which a package is to be sent from a user to a recipient by requesting said shipping through Internet resources associated with carriers capable of delivering the package to the recipient, in which the user of the shipping system determines the carrier to be used for shipping a package to a recipient, and in which the shipping system has a shipping system server with a data storage device for storing package tracking data, comprising:

means for generating a tracking number associated with a package to be sent from the user to the recipient by a selected carrier;

means for generating a tracking request containing the tracking number associated with the package, as well as information of the particular carrier which is to deliver the package to the recipients;

queues for storing the tracking requests;

a tracking coordinator for receipt of said tracking request and for generating tracking objects and sending said tracking objects to the tracking website of the selected carrier;

means for receiving results from the tracking website of the selected carrier; and

means for updating the shipping server data storage with the results from the carrier website.

2. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 1, further comprising a tracking result queue for receiving the results from all of the carrier websites and for outputting these results for delivery to the shipping system server data storage device.

3. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 2, wherein the shipping system server has an instant tracking component for allowing a user to generate a tracking request for a package, wherein the tracking coordinator has means for generating a tracking object for the user tracking request that is prioritized with respect to other tracking objects generated for the same carrier as that associated with the user's package.

4. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 3, wherein the tracking coordinator limits the generation of tracking objects for a particular carrier so as to be generated no more frequently than a predetermined number of tracking objects per predetermined time interval.

5. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 3, wherein the tracking coordinator limits the generation of tracking objects so that the total number of tracking objects generated for a particular carrier over a predetermined time interval does not exceed a predetermined number, regarding the pacing of the generation of said tracking objects.

6. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 3, wherein the tracking coordinator has means for generating tracking objects to a carrier tracking website using multiple Internet Protocol addresses.

7. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 3, wherein the shipping system server includes a scheduler for automatically retrieving information required to generate a tracking request from the data storage device, wherein the scheduler times said retrieval of information to occur at a predetermined time.

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8. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 1, wherein the shipping system server has an instant tracking component for allowing a user to generate a tracking request for a package, wherein the tracking coordinator has means for generating a tracking object for the user tracking request that is prioritized with respect to other tracking objects generated for the same carrier as that associated with the user's package.

9. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 8, wherein the tracking coordinator limits the generation of tracking objects for a particular carrier so as to be generated no more frequently than a predetermined number per predetermined time interval.

10. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 9, wherein the tracking coordinator limits the generation of tracking objects so that the total number generated for a particular carrier over a predetermined time interval does not exceed a predetermined number, regarding the pacing of the generation of said tracking components.

11. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 8, wherein the tracking coordinator has means for generating tracking objects to a carrier tracking website using multiple Internet Protocol addresses.

12. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 8, wherein the shipping system server includes a scheduler for automatically retrieving information required to generate a tracking request from the data storage device, wherein the scheduler times said retrieval of information to occur at a predetermined time.

13. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 1, further comprising an E-mail services component for generating an E-mail message

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to a party specified by the user when the tracking information indicates that the package has been delivered to the recipient.

14. A tracking system for a shipping system as defined in claim 8, further comprising an E-mail services component for generating an E-mail message to a party specified by the user when the tracking information indicates that the package has been delivered to the recipient.

15. A tracking method for a shipping system in which a package is to be sent from a user to a recipient by requesting said shipping through Internet resources associated with carriers capable of delivering the package to the recipient, in which the user of the shipping system determines the carrier to be used for shipping a package to a recipient, and in which the shipping system has a shipping system server with a data storage device for storing package tracking data, comprising the steps of:

    (a) generating a tracking number associated with a package to be sent from the user to the recipient by a selected carrier;

    (b) generating a tracking request containing the tracking number associated with the package, as well as information of the particular carrier which is to deliver the package to the recipients;

    (c) storing the tracking requests;

    (d) generating tracking objects and sending said tracking objects to the tracking website of the selected carrier;

    (e) receiving results from the tracking website of the selected carrier; and

    (f) updating the shipping server data storage with the results from the carrier website.

16. A tracking method as defined in claim 15, further comprising the step of receiving the results from all of the carrier websites and for outputting these results for delivery to the shipping system server data storage device.

17. A tracking method as defined in claim 16, further comprising the steps of allowing a user to generate an instant tracking request for a package, and for generating a tracking object for the user tracking request that is prioritized with respect to other tracking objects generated for the same carrier as that associated with the user's package.

18. A tracking method as defined in claim 15, further comprising the step of limiting the generation of tracking objects for a particular carrier so that tracking objects are generated no more frequently than a predetermined number per predetermined time interval.

19. A tracking method as defined in claim 17, further comprising the step of limiting the generation of tracking objects so that the total number generated for a particular carrier over a predetermined time interval does not exceed a predetermined number, regarding the pacing of the generation of said tracking objects.

20. A tracking method as defined in claim 17, further comprising the step of generating tracking objects to a carrier tracking website using multiple Internet Protocol addresses.

21. A tracking method as defined in claim 17, further comprising the step of automatically scheduling retrieving information required to generate a tracking request from the data storage device at a predetermined time.

22. A tracking method as defined in claim 15, wherein the shipping system server has an instant tracking component for allowing a user to generate a tracking request for a package, wherein the tracking coordinator has means for generating a tracking object for the user tracking request that is prioritized with respect to other tracking objects generated for the same carrier as that associated with the user's package.

23. A tracking method as defined in claim 15, further comprising the step of limiting the generation of tracking objects for a particular carrier so that tracking objects are generated no more frequently than a predetermined number per predetermined time interval.

24. A tracking method as defined in claim 23, further comprising the step of limiting the generation of tracking objects so that the total number generated for a particular carrier over a predetermined time interval does not exceed a predetermined number, regarding the pacing of the generation of said tracking objects.

25. A tracking method as defined in claim 22, further comprising the step of generating tracking objects to a carrier tracking website using multiple Internet Protocol addresses.

26. A tracking method as defined in claim 23, further comprising the step of automatically scheduling retrieving information required to generate a tracking request from the data storage device at a predetermined time.

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